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CHAPTER XII.

OF THE MAGISTRATES, CAPTAINS, CACIQUES, &c. OF THE ABIPONES, AND OF THEIR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.

622 [643] The Abipones do not acknowledge any prince who reigns with supreme power over the whole nation. They are divided into hordes, each of which is headed by a man, whom the Spaniards call capitan, or cacique, the Peruvians curáca, the Guaranies aba rubicha, and the Abipones nelaleyrât, or capitâ. This word capitan sounds very grand in the ears of the Americans. They think they are using a very honourable title when they call the God, or King of the Spaniards, *capitan latènc*, or *capitan guazù*, the great captain. By this word, indeed, they mean to designate not only supreme power, and eminent dignity, but also every kind of nobility. Sometimes miserable looking old women, wretchedly clothed, and rich only in wrinkles, to prevent us from thinking them of low birth, will say *aym capitâ*, I am a captain, I am noble. I was astonished at hearing the savages buried in the woods of Mbaeverà, and cut off from all intercourse with the Spaniards, address their caciques by the names of Capitâ

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Roÿ, Capitâ Tupânchiohu, Capitâ Veraripotschiritù, neglecting their own word, *aba rubicha*; so universal and honourable is the title of captain amongst the savage nations. Should an Abipon meet a Spaniard dressed very handsomely, he would not hesitate to call him captain, though he might be of low rank, and distinguished by no dignity or nobility whatever. Moreover, in Paraguay, Spaniards of the lowest rank, who live in the country, are extremely ambitious of the title of captain, and if you do not call them so every now and then, will look angry, and refuse to do you any kind of service, even to give you a drop of water if you are ever so thirsty. The Christian Guaranies have the same foolish mania for titles. After having laboured hard for two or three years in the royal camps, they think themselves amply repaid for their toils and wounds, if, at the end of the expedition, they return to their colony honoured by the royal governour with the title and staff of a captain. At all times even when employed, barefoot, in building or agriculture, they ostentatiously hold the captain's staff in their hands. When they are carried to the grave, this wooden ensign is suspended from the bier. When a man is at the point of death, and just going to receive extreme unction, he puts on his military boots and

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G 554 177 spurs, takes his staff in his hand, and in this trim awaits the priest, and even approaching death, as if in the intent of frightening the grim spectre away. On the domestics' expressing their surprize at the unusual attire of the dying man, he sternly and gravely observes, that this is the manner in which it becomes a captain to die. Such is the signification and the honour attached to the word captain in America.

G 622 Amongst the Guaranies, who have embraced the Christian religion, in various colonies, the name and office of cacique is hereditary. When a cacique dies, his eldest son succeeds without dispute, whatever his talents or disposition may be. Amongst the Abipones, too, the eldest A 622 son succeeds, but only provided that he be of a good character, of a noble and warlike disposition, in short, fit for the office; for if he be indolent, ill-natured, and foolish in his conduct, he is set aside, and another substituted, who is not related to the former by any tie of blood. But to say the truth, the cacique elected by the Abipones has no cause for pride, nor he that is rejected for grief and envy. The name of cacique is certainly a high title amongst the Abipones, but it is more a burden than an honour, and often brings with it greater danger than profit. For they neither revere their cacique as a master, nor pay him tribute or

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attendance as is usual with other nations. They invest him neither with the authority of a judge, an arbitrator, or an avenger. Drunken men frequently kill one another; women quarrel, and often imbrue their hands in one another's blood; young men, fond of glory or booty, rob the Spaniards, to whom they had promised peace, of whole droves of horses, and sometimes secretly slay them: and the cacique, though aware of all these things, dares not say a word. If he were but to rebuke them for these transgressions, which are reckoned amongst the merits, virtues, and victories of the savages, with a single harsh word, he would be punished in the next drinking-party with the fists of the intoxicated savages, and publicly loaded with insults, as a friend to the Spaniards, and a greater lover of ease than of his people. How often have Ychamenraikin, chief cacique of the Riikahes, and Narè, of the Yaaucanigas, experienced this! How often have they returned from a drinking-party with swelled eyes, bruised hands, pale cheeks, and faces exhibiting all the colours of the rainbow!

But although the Abipones neither fear their cacique as a judge, nor honour him as a master, yet his fellow-soldiers follow him as a leader and governour of the war, whenever the enemy is to be attacked or repelled. Some, however,

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622 refuse to follow him, for what Cæsar said
701 of the German chiefs is applicable to the Abiponian cacique: *Authoritate suadendi magis, quam jubendi potestate audiatur.* As soon as a report
622 is spread of the danger of an hostile attack, the
726 business of the cacique is to provide for the security of his people; to increase the store of weapons; to order the horses to be fetched from the distant pastures to safer places; to send out watchers by night, and scouts in every direction, to procure supplies from the neighbours, and to gain their alliance. When the enemy is to be attacked, he rides before his men, and occupies the front of the army he has raised, less solicitous about the numbers of the enemy, than the firmness of his troops: for as with birds, when one is shot, the rest fly away, in like manner the Abipones, alarmed at the deaths or wounds of a few of their fellow-soldiers, desert their leader, and escape on swift horses, wherever room for flight is afforded them, more anxious about their own safety than about obtaining a victory. Yet it must be acknowledged that this nation never wants its heroes. Many remain intrepid whilst their
[703] companions fall around them, and though pierced with wounds and streaming with blood, retain even in death the station where they fought. Desire of glory, ferocious study of revenge, or

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despair of escape, inspires the naturally fearful with courage, which a Lacedemonian would admire, and which Europe desires to see in her warriors.

Moreover, being lovers of liberty and roving, they choose to own no law, and bind themselves to their cacique by no oaths of fidelity. Without leave asked on their part, or displeasure evinced on his, they remove with their families whithersoever it suits them, and join some other cacique; and when tired of the second, return with impunity to the horde of the first. This is quite common, and a matter of surprize to no one that knows how fleeting is the faith, how mutable the will of the Indians. Should a report be spread by uncertain or suspicious authors, that the enemy are coming in a few days, it is enough. Numbers, dreading the loss of life more than of fame, will desert their cacique, and hasten with their families to some well-known retreats. Lest however they should be branded with the name of deserters and cowards, they say they are going out to hunt. Hence, whenever we priests had to defend the new colonies filled with savage assailants, and almost destitute of inhabitants to repel them, we generally made more use of craft and threats than of force. The danger, or the fear of it, being dissipated, these fugacious heroes at length came home, no

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621 722 157 one daring to accuse them of cowardice, though no one could be ignorant that fear prompted their departure, security their return.

622 721 Whenever a cacique determines upon undertaking an excursion, a public drinking-party is appointed. [273] Heated with that luscious beverage, prepared from honey or the alfaroba, they zealously offer their services to the cacique, who invites them to war, sing triumph before the victory with festive vociferations, and, (who would believe it?) diligently execute when sober, what they promised in a state of intoxication. 431 622 That love is kindled by love, as fire by fire, and that friends are gained by liberality, are trite proverbs in Europe, and have been experienced by us in our long commerce with the Abipones. A cacique who seldom gives a repulse will have numerous, obedient, and affectionate hordesmen. Kind words or looks, the marks of good-will, avail but little amongst the savages, unless accompanied with beneficence. They require at the cacique's hands whatever they take it into their heads to wish for, believing that his office obliges him to satisfy the petitions of all. 431 622 If he denies them anything, they say he is not a captain, or noble, and [558] insolently bestow upon him the disgraceful appellation of wood-Indian — *Acami Lanaïaik.* 626 The cacique has nothing, either in his arms or his

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clothes, to distinguish him from a common man, except the peculiar oldness and shabbiness of them; for if he appear in the street with new and handsome apparel, just taken out of his wife's loom, the first person he meets will boldly cry, Give me that dress, *Tach caué grihilalgi*; and unless he immediately parts with it, he becomes the scoff and the scorn of all, and hears himself called covetous and niggardly. Sometimes, when they came to ask a great favour of me, they would stroke my shoulder, and say in a sweet tone, You are indeed a captain, Father; by which honourable appellation they wished me to understand that it was unlike a captain to refuse a man any thing. As those things which they asked me for were not always in my possession, nor could indeed be found in any shop at Amsterdam, I told them I was no captain, that they might bear a refusal with good humour, and attribute it to poverty, not to ill-nature. But it was all in vain. They construe a Father's excuse into a falsehood, and exclaim, not without much laughter on both sides, What a liar, what a miser you are! I found that those caciques had abundance of followers who were active and successful in the acquirement of booty, free from sordid avarice, and fond of displaying an unbounded liberality towards their hordesmen. Kaapetraikin and Kebachin had

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A 431 555 622 crowds of soldiers in their service, because they were distinguished for dexterity and assiduity in depredation; the same men, when decrepit with extreme age, inadequate to undertaking excursions, and consequently poor, found none but relations continue in their hordes.

A 562 622 I must not omit to mention that the Abipones do not scorn to be governed by women of noble birth; for at the time that I resided in Paraguay, there was a high-born matron, to whom the Abipones gave the title of *Nelaʔeycatè*, and who numbered some families in her horde. Her origin, and the merits of her ancestors, procured her the veneration of others. A C 622 648 The Catholic kings themselves, and their governours, acknowledge the rank of the caciques of every nation, and dignify them with the title of nobility, prefixing the word *Don* to their names, according to the Spanish fashion. It is also customary, throughout the whole of Spanish America, for the Indian caciques, after they have received baptism, and sworn allegiance to the Catholic king, to retain, and transmit to their posterity the dominion they possessed when savage, over the savages subject to their power: which is also observed amongst the Guaranies, with this provision, however, that the caciques themselves and the Indians under their authority, are obliged to

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A C 622 648

obey the corregidor, and other magistrates of the town. In every Guarany town, there are a number of caciques, who, if men of abilities, are often promoted to the office of magistrates, that the Indians may not suspect the Europeans of despising their nobility. There were five caciques in the town of St. Joachim, over which I presided. Their names were Don Ignatius Paranderi, Don Miguel Yeyu, Don Marco Quirakerà, Don Joseph Xavier, and Don Miguel Yazukà; which last performed the office of corregidor for many years. Though a native of the woods, he was both exceedingly attached to Christian discipline, and intrepid in guarding it; indeed he was above all praise: which is certainly very uncommon and wonderful, as, to say the truth, we have often found the caciques more stupid than the common people, and less skilful in the public employments of the town. Who, therefore, can blame the Abipones, if, setting aside the privilege of birth, they elect a cacique, who, though of obscure origin, is distinguished for military valour?

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CHAPTER XX.

GAMES ON THE BIRTH OF THE MALE CHILD OF A CACIQUE.

The love implanted in the minds of all nations towards their prince never shows itself more clearly than when the birth of an heir is announced. Festive fires, theatrical games, joyous acclamations, songs, paintings, sculpture, elegant dances, and various other things attest the public joy. This custom of the Europeans, the savage and warlike Abipones in their fashion imitate. They make public show of rejoicing for some days, when informed of the birth of a Cacique's son. As soon as a report is spread of the birth of the son of a Cacique, the whole crowd of girls, bearing palm boughs in their hands, repair to the house of the infant amid festive acclamations; they run round the roof and sides of it, shaking the palm boughs, by which percussion they happily augur that the child will become famous in war, and the scourge of his enemies. The use of the palms, and the other ceremonies which follow all have relation to this. The strongest of the women is covered from the loins to the legs, with a sort

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of apron made of the longer ostrich feathers. That woman has every day the most business to perform; for in company with the other girls, she visits all the huts, and with a hide, twisted in the form of Hercules's club, whips, puts to flight, and pursues all the men that she finds in every house, and those that are met by the way are soundly beaten by the girls, with the palm boughs. The first day is passed in this running up and down, amidst the laughter of the flagellated men. Next day the girls, who are distributed into bands, wrestle with one another, and the boys do the same in a separate place. On the third day they are called out to dance, the boys on one side, and the girls on the other. They all join hands till a circle is formed, an old woman, the directress of the dance going round striking a gourd: and when after a whirling for some time, they grow giddy, they rest at intervals, and then renew their dancing, which contains nothing worthy of admiration, but the patience displayed on the part both of the spectators and of the performers, and is perfectly devoid of art. On the fourth day, the woman with the apron of ostrich feathers traverses the town, surrounded by girls, challenging the stoutest and strongest woman she finds in every house, to contend with her in the street; and now throwing her adversary, now being herself thrown, affords an amusing spectacle to the assembled people.

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being herself thrown, affords an amusing spectacle to the assembled people. During the remaining days, (for those games last eight days,) either the former sports are renewed, or the men joyfully indulge in public drinking-parties, wherein songs are alternately sung to the sound of drum. Of the other games, on the occasion of some person's being admitted to the rank of captain, of the celebration of any signal victory, of the death of a noble, the removal of the bones of the dead, the shaving of a widow's hair, &c. we shall discourse elsewhere. Of this I am quite certain, that the Abipones Nakaiketergehes, or wood-Abipones, are much more observant of national rites and ceremonies than the rest. It is incredible what time and labour it cost us to abolish the national rites of this ferocious nation, which the example of their ancestors had hallowed in their eyes. An oak a hundred years old, which has stuck its roots deep into the ground, is not felled at a blow. But now, from nuptial and natal games, let us proceed to things of a more gloomy character, to diseases, physicians, and medicines.

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683 ing to the town of St. Ferdinand. Divine Pro-
754 vidence seems to have dictated her flight; for the Cacique Ychoalay, who was absent from the town at the time of the event, when informed by me of Ychohàke's cruelty, and re-
622 quested to restrain his brother, replied that he
683 should come immediately, not to restrain his
754 brother, but to kill that woman, whom he had long thought infamous for her magic arts, and to be feared by all. And indeed, being very firm in his resolves, he would have put his threats into execution without a doubt, had he found the woman in the town. For, in former years, when they wandered up and down the plains, he turned out of his horde all women suspected of sorcery, and pierced many of them, though perhaps perfectly innocent, with a spear, that they might never deceive any one again; being often condemned both on the score of credulity and cruelty.

797 But this bloody tragedy, at length, had a happy termination. The Indian Ychohàke ceased at length to live and to be feared, and you will be surprised to hear that one, who, in his lifetime, had been so mad in his suspicions of sorcery, grew sane in his last moments. Having received baptism, at his own desire, conscious of approaching dissolution he de-

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768 making use of a paraphrase. But if the name
551 of the defunct be derived from an appellative noun, the word is abolished by proclamation, and a new one substituted. It is the prerogative of the old women to invent these new
[888 names, which are quickly divulgated amongst
562] the widely-scattered hordes of the Abipones, and are so firmly imprinted on their minds, that no one individual is ever heard to utter a proscribed word.

553 All the friends and relations of the deceased
768 change the names they formerly bore. In the colony of the Rosary, the wife of the chief Cacique dying of the small-pox, her husband changed his name of Revachigi to that of Oahari. His mother and brother and captive, as well as all the brothers of the deceased, had new names given them with various ceremonies. The old mother of the Cacique was extremely fond of a lank, scraggy dog, unworthy of the very air it breathed. When this change of names was made, I asked the old woman what name would be given her dog, to show them that we held their absurd rites in ridicule, though unable at that time to prevent them.

766 On the death of a Cacique, all the men under
622] his authority shave their long hair as a sign of grief. Widows also have their hair shaven, and
[302] wear a kind of cloak made of the caraquatà,

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I have known Abipones
273 who abstained from fermented liquors alto-
[626] gether; but these persons were contemned by the rest as cowardly, degenerate, and stupid; and indeed, I observed that they who excelled the rest in birth, military glory, and authority,
[622] were generally the most given to drinking. You can scarce see a circle of drinkers, at which the chiefs of the Abipones do not attend and preside.

[415] For cups they use either the skulls of their
[727] slain enemies, or gourds, or horns. They are
[576] unacquainted with the European fashion of
[721] drinking healths. When any one suggests the idea of a warlike expedition, they cry *Là*, now; and snatching up their cups, express that they have ratified his proposal by a hearty draught.
[261] It is also remarkable, that, though extremely voracious at other times, they take scarce any food when they pass the day and night in drinking; from which it is evident that honey and the alfaroba possess great nutritive qualities. For my part, I never could prevail upon myself to taste that nectar of the Abipones, having often observed them chew the alfaroba, or honeycomb with their teeth, put it out of their mouths, and keep it to mix with the future beverage; for they think that, being mixed with saliva, it will serve for a ferment, to make the rest of the mass obtain a grateful